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## ABSTRACT

Suggestions on how community resources can be organized and made available for both formal education activities and residents of a community are provided. Six categories of community resource learning experiences are examined, consisting of study strips, resource persons, community services, community resource maps, community surveys, and camping (outdoor education). Each activity is nonbook in character and usually takes place outside of the formal classroom situation. Most effective use of these resources requires advanced planning and a formalized use sequence including selection of the resource, preliminary arrangements, teacher-student planning and preparation, student experience with the resource, checking and follow-up, and evaluation. Full and proper use of community resources depends upon adequate administrative support. Funds should be allocated for the production, periodic updating, and distribution of community resource directories. Not only students but also community residents with leisure time can take advantage of these local resources to continue their education. The author suggests that all agencies in a community cooperate in publicizing their resources and helping people to explore them. (Author/DE)

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# THE COMMUNITY AS TEXTBOOK

Catharine Williams

FASTBACK

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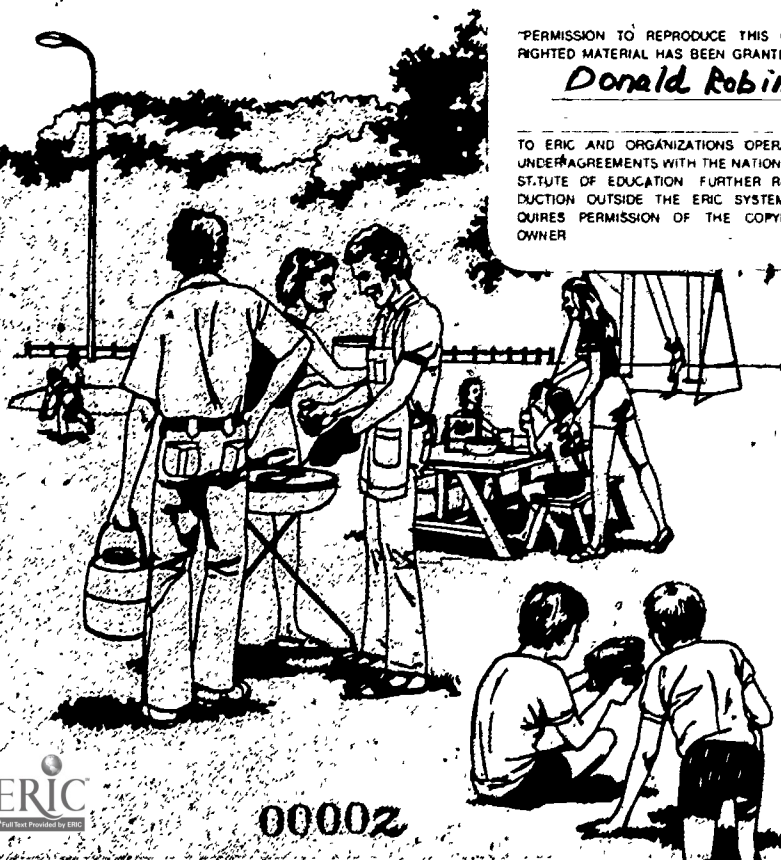
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Series editor, Donald W. Robinson

# THE COMMUNITY AS TEXTBOOK

By Catharine M. Williams

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## OVERVIEW

Every community, no matter what its location or size, is a learning laboratory. Its people, its animal and plant life, its places, processes, and products are all resources for learning.

We are all members of several communities. We live in a neighborhood, a school community, a village or city, and a county, state, national, and even a world community. Modern communication and transportation link us together so that citizens of any local community may feel a sense of oneness with those of another half a world away. An earthquake or a famine in any part of the world brings help from distant communities. Modern communication puts small communities in almost instant touch with large cities and their resources. By telelecture we can bring into the classroom a specialist from halfway across the country.

In this fastback we shall consider use of local community resources for learning. Although we shall focus primarily on use of community resources for formal education, we shall also consider ways of using them to enrich learning during the many years not devoted to formal schooling.

We suggest thinking of the community as a laboratory equipped with a limitless number of varied resources for learning by inquiry, observation, and experimentation. How are teachers and students using these resources? Do these resources have any distinctive attributes? How are these resources grouped for teaching and learning? To seek answers to these questions, let us visit a few classes briefly.

## Learning Situations

After a group of third-graders happily took off for two weeks at camp, we followed another third-grade classroom teacher who had invited an American Indian as a resource person to correct a misconception. When the Indian gentleman walked into the classroom dressed in an ordinary, business suit, it was fascinating to watch the expressions on the children's faces. They had probably expected to see an Indian in war paint and headdress. Instead, they viewed slides of today's Indian—his family, his home, and his friends. They learned that many Indians are struggling to adapt to city life. As I left the room I realized that, because of the use of community resources, this was a case of "mission accomplished."

Eleventh-grade students were studying community problems. Two boys presented a series of community resource maps to show the direction of urban growth and the pattern of inner-city change.

In another school, a beekeeper had just finished demonstrating his equipment for handling bees, emphasizing key points that the eighth-graders should look for as they studied the bees at work in the hive and in a partially filled honeycomb.

Specially prepared tape recordings such as Dial Access Information Retrieval Systems and telelecture represent newer ways of bringing resource people into the classroom. Telelecture, for example, had made it possible for a school newspaper staff to interview the editor of a large metropolitan newspaper seventy-five miles away. The interview took but twenty minutes, otherwise this busy individual could not have "visited" the classroom.

In a sixth-grade room, an unusual collection of materials gathered from the community was hidden by a screen bearing the sign, "Inventors' Corner." To this collection teacher and students add any scrap material that has potential for creative expression. As the students gather round to study a new addition, you might hear someone exclaim, "Now, just what could anyone do with that?" At first there might be ridiculous suggestions, but soon creative thinking would begin. Someone would exclaim, "Say, I have a great idea!" and really do something creative with the new material.

The scope and variety of experiences that can be gained from a short walking trip may be realized from observing pupils on a few such trips. A kindergarten class took a listening walk to note what they could hear when they trod lightly and listened carefully. At a junior high school, a group of home economics students walked to a nearby home where a young mother discussed and demonstrated the preparation and process of giving an infant its bath. Then they shared their information with the class.

A committee of sixth-graders were studying the yellow pages of the telephone directory. Their community service project involved producing a guide to local resources that contribute to study of things distant in time and space. Another committee was searching the archives at the city library, while still another was searching the card index at the school's audiovisual office to get addresses of resource persons who have indicated that they have antiques.

### **Know the Resources**

Resource learning experiences were invariably in one of the following groupings:

Study Trips

Community Resource Maps

Resource Persons

Community Surveys

Community Services

Camping (Outdoor Education)

These are the six categories in which community resources are grouped for purposes of teaching and learning. The classification is descriptive in that each category describes the nature of the experience through which students learn from the community.

The distinguishing feature of community resources for learning is that they are nonbook in character and that the learning usually takes place "in the field." With the nonbook attribute in mind, let us take a close look at the varied resources.

Edgar Dale suggests looking at instructional materials as they are related to the major categories of communication: speaking and listening, visualizing and observing, reading and writing. Speaking, visualizing, and writing represent the producing of messages, listening, observing, and reading represent the reception or consuming of messages.

### **What Can Community Resources Do?**

Community resources can vitalize and improve the teaching-



learning process in many ways. For example, community resources can.

- *Encourage learning by inquiry and discovery*—Experiences with community resources command active learner involvement, not necessarily as overt physical involvement, but rather, in the sense of inquiry and exploration.

- *Become a bridge between the work of the school and the work of the world outside.* Learning from "the field" provides a frame of reference in which to place in-school learning. Also children learn to relate what they have experienced "in the field" to work in the classroom.

- *Strengthen motivation for learning*—Motivation, the desire for learning, is essential to meaningful learning. It has been established that the use of nonbook materials often increases the learner's motivation. Consequently the learning outcomes become emotionally stimulating as well as intellectually rewarding.

- *Provide opportunity to learn out in the workaday world*—It is important that students have professionally guided experiences in learning how to learn "in the field situation" where they will do much of their learning (and be on their own) after high school and college.

- *Extend the range of learning experiences*—The range of learning experiences provided by community resources serves learners possessed of a wide range of abilities and skills, for example, nonreaders and highly skilled readers.

- *Provide change and variety*—Monotony is a deterrent to learning. With the wide range of experiences community resources offer, it is possible to provide the varied approaches that give vitality to learning.

- *Improve the effectiveness of other instructional materials*—Community resources can provide forceful experiences that will increase the impact of the textbook or motivate search among other materials.

- *Build respect for people and for excellence wherever it may be found*—When citizens from all walks of life serve as experts and consultants able and willing to help students solve their problems, students learn to respect people for what they are regardless of who they are

## TEACHING WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In the past community resources have been underused. Misuse would also ill serve the learners. To select, use, and evaluate community resources for learning require a high level of teacher competency. The process requires organizing all materials of instruction, including community resources, so as to maximize the learning possibilities for a particular group of learners. This can be done only if the teacher knows the students, the teaching purposes, and the resources. Students should be involved in each stage of the processes of selection, use, and evaluation. Such involvement is requisite to becoming the independent learners they are capable of becoming.

To select the best resources, the teacher must be familiar with all resources, both book and nonbook. Among all available resources, she should select the most effective ones for helping a given learner do what the teacher intends that he will be able to do as a result of the learning experience. The best resource for providing such help may be a study trip, or it may be a learning laboratory experience or an experience involving book-type resources.

We have an obligation not only to help students understand the content of the learning experience but also to help them develop their powers of observation. Just as we work to develop ability to read, we must work to help children develop competency in observing. The skilled observer is able to see beyond the surface facts. He becomes an educated observer searching out the less obvious meanings.

Observation is a skill that can be developed and perfected. We encourage selective viewing when we help students plan in advance of a scheduled learning experience the questions to be answered and the ideas to be explored. Note taking and sketching while studying a resource are further aids to observation. Record keeping and follow-up discussion can help students to become increasingly skilled observers.

### **Advance Planning**

Locating resource persons may well start with designing a survey form for use in taking an inventory of resource persons among local building personnel. Administrative staff, service personnel, teachers, and students all may have specialties not associated with their workaday roles at school. Further, by using such a survey form at school, teachers may make the needed revisions before using it with outside school personnel. Suggested survey forms may be found in a number of publications, a few of which are listed under "References."

Whatever form is used should include provision for obtaining the name, occupation, address, and telephone number of the potential resource person, and the time of day when he can be reached by phone. There should be ample space for recording special interests and talents, special experiences, accomplishments, and hobbies. Harold R. Bottrell has prepared a survey form that has been heartily endorsed by people who have used it.

Information recorded on the completed forms can be made readily available simply by duplicating the forms for assembling in loose-leaf notebooks or by preparing card file indices. If the notebook approach is used, the initial task is simplified. However, a card file simplifies the process of locating a desired resource person.

The school may decide to make a resource persons inventory of the school's parent population. If so, survey forms should be distributed to both mothers and fathers. It is desirable to include a cover letter explaining the use to which the information will be put, along with a word of appreciation for parent cooperation.

Some schools include on the parent's survey form space for the listing of names and telephone numbers of other adults who

the parent feels could make a rich contribution to the school program. Through this device, some schools have obtained many excellent leads to still other valuable resource persons. When responses are processed, parents or other volunteers can sometimes be recruited for typing and other work required in setting up a satisfactory card file.

### The Use Sequence

Whatever community resource is selected, its effective use requires a sequence of planned experiences. The sequence includes: 1) selection of the resource, 2) preliminary arrangements, 3) teacher-student planning and preparation, 4) student experiences with the resource, 5) checking and follow-up, and 6) evaluation.

The "study trip" is the learning resource used in the following discussion of activities included in each step of the sequence.

1. The use sequence should get under way as soon as the teaching objectives have been identified. This sequence starts with **selection of the resource** to be used. Students should be involved in this selection to the extent that their maturity and the situation warrant. Key questions to consider in making the selection are:

Does use of this particular resource:

Represent the best way to provide the needed learning?

Suit the abilities, interests, and maturity of the learners?

Seem worth the time and expense involved?

Lead to fruitful classroom activities from the planning stage through evaluation?

Seem likely to have the support of parents and the community?

Provide a generally truthful impression, that is, is it an adequate sample and an effective example?

2. As soon as a specific study trip has been selected, the teacher is ready for step two **making preliminary arrangements**.

The teacher's role varies with the services provided by the school. In some districts teachers are responsible for completing all arrangements. In others, arrangements for transportation and use of the resource are completed through a central office to which the teacher sends a trip request form.

When a teacher has to make all arrangements himself, use of a checklist such as the following is helpful.

Destination: German Village

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Depart: \_\_\_\_\_ Return: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrange for school permission and transportation

Arrange for parent approval

Brief tour guide at village

• Tour village—make route guide

Arrange for use of school camera and tape recorder

Arrange for serving of a German meal

Collect trip fees from students

Arrange transportation.

Every item on the list is self-explanatory except the briefing of the tour guide. This consists of telling him the purpose of the visit and the background the group will have, as well as providing him with a list of the children's questions to be answered. Teacher and guide plan the route for the trip, the teacher locates restrooms and such other facilities as may be needed.

3. Much of the value of a study trip depends upon the quality of the **teacher-student planning and preparation**. Major teacher responsibilities include clarifying purposes of the trip and helping students obtain information about what may be observed. Children need this information to be able to participate intelligently in formulating questions to be answered, selecting pertinent book and nonbook sources of information, assembling needed equipment, and considering standards of safety and behavior.

When discussing questions to be answered, the teacher will help students learn how to frame good, sharp questions. Questions are their tools for gathering data, along with observation and discussion with the resource person. As students acquire more information and insight through discussion and use of other resources, questions will doubtless be added to the original list.

Preparation varies with the nature of the resource to be visited. For some study trips, new vocabulary must be mastered. For trips to large and complicated places, for example, an airport, maps or charts may be helpful. Use of a simple diagram

of the airport helps students understand both the functions and the interrelationships of the parts of this complex facility

The teacher describes to students the planned route to be followed at the resource site, key points are indicated, and approximate time for reaching each is noted.

An aspect often overlooked is the route traveled to and from the resource. Teacher-student planning can make these short journeys a significant educational experience. For some students these journeys provide their only opportunities to observe parts of the community beyond their own neighborhoods. The bus may be routed past points of interest and scheduled for brief stops at designated points. Students can learn much about their community through participation in planning the routes. They may prepare a route guide sheet with points of interest marked.

4. Obviously, the **student experiences with the resource** vary with the nature and purpose of the trip. On trips to gather specimens, for example, there is considerable physical activity, wide dispersion of students, and no reason for maintaining quiet. On the other hand, if the trip is a guided tour, there is reason for quietly listening and keeping close together. With adequate planning, the field experience is often marked by a high degree of absorption in the task at hand.

The teacher's responsibility is great. She must be ready to do whatever needs to be done. Normally the teacher watches the time to see that no part of the planned experience is neglected, that everyone can see and hear, and that safety precautions are exercised. When young children make up the group, many teachers use volunteer parent help so that each adult may have responsibility for no more than six children. Before leaving for the return journey, it is helpful to hold a short on-the-spot discussion to clarify misconceptions or permit checking on matters that may require further observation.

5. **Checking and follow-up** include activities that flow naturally from the learning experience. Both follow-up and evaluation are carried on concurrently.

Teacher and students together plan to put the information gathered during the trip to its intended use. Usually plans are made for production of some kind of trip report or record. This may be in the form of a play, a booklet, or a frieze—whatever

form seems challenging and appropriate. Planning, producing, and sharing the report with other groups provide purposeful experiences in group processes. Thank-you letters are written to express appreciation for courtesies extended.

**6. Evaluation** rounds out the activities of the Use Sequence. Who should be involved in the evaluation and at what points? Evaluation of outcomes is not a one-time process, but a continuous open-ended process. It involves the learners, their teacher, and any resource persons who have contributed their time and services.

For learners at all levels of maturity, an evaluative check closely following the field experience should be used to consider the extent to which the experience produced the intended results.

When children find that their questions were answered and that they learned much more than just the answers to their questions, they feel a rewarding sense of accomplishment. When results fall far short of expectations, even young children should be helped to discover the reason.

If encouraged by the teacher's example and interest, affective outcomes, that is, expressions of feelings and appreciations may appear. Although we dare not probe or push, lest we do irreparable damage, neither should we fail to make such expressions a natural part of the discussion for those who are ready to verbalize their feelings.

The teacher has further evaluation duties. He will make assessments of observable changes in student attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions in relation to the follow-up experiences that grow out of use of the resource and the amount of teacher-student time and effort involved. These several assessments cannot all be completed immediately.

The teacher also has responsibility for exchanging evaluations with the resource person, preparing a record of the visit for use by other teachers, and preparing an evaluation report for the school files. The exchange of evaluations with resource people has proved to be good public relations.

### **Rich Promises**

Art galleries, museums, and zoos have long been frequently used study trip resources, yet they often fail to live up to their rich

promise. These three resources have one thing in common, they are designed as resource centers, for each contains materials suitable for a variety of selective learning experiences but unsuitable for use all at once to provide a single learning experience. Many teachers misuse these resources by crowding into a single experience all that can possibly be packed in. This prevents making proper plans for learning. The students approach the resource with no definite purposes. And because there is so much to see, there is no time to pause long enough to observe critically by questioning, comparing, contrasting, or checking among themselves on newly discovered information.

Crowding too much into a learning experience is just one reason for failure to realize expected outcomes when using these resources. Often teachers plan well with children in setting up purposes but fail to plan a sequence of experiences to provide adequately for realizing those purposes.

A college student's account of a trip to a museum is introduced here to illustrate the effective use of a well-planned sequence. The account follows.

When Mr. Jenny at the Ohio Historical Museum said that he "would make history come alive for us that afternoon," I was dubious. Thus began our college class trip to the museum to study use of museum resources for learning. Mr. Jenny began with a very interesting explanation of the educational work performed by museum personnel. Then he moved quite smoothly into a role-playing situation in which our class members were cast as sixth-graders at the museum studying ancient Ohio history, prehistoric man in particular.

Mr. Jenny first presented a skillfully structured talk about prehistoric man. This aroused interest, especially since he discussed matters related to experiences that we had probably had while at camp or on hikes. Out of this discussion came suggestions for certain things to look for in the three adjoining rooms reserved for our use. Then Mr. Jenny distributed a set of questions about the food, clothing, and tools of prehistoric man and the animals and plants of that era. We were given a limited time in which to locate answers to these questions. Because of Mr. Jenny's careful planning, we dispersed to use the three adjoining rooms filled with pertinent materials with purposes in mind and specific things to look for. This made the work both meaningful and orderly. Mr. Jenny moved about among us until it was time to meet together to check on and share our findings.

I was impressed especially with three things. 1) the interest,



skill, and enthusiasm displayed by Mr. Jenny, 2) the importance of thoughtful, imaginative preplanning, and 3) the limiting of the vast resources of the museum to those that contributed to a study of the problem at hand, prehistoric man.

Mr. Jenny, the skilled museum teacher cited in the student's account, has taught many teachers to use museum resources effectively. With this beautiful demonstration in mind, it may be helpful to review why study trips fall short of being rich learning experiences. Usually failure can be attributed to one or more of the following:

- A sequence of experience was not planned
- The learners were not involved in the planning
- The learners did not understand the purposes
- The resource was used to entertain, not to educate
- Too much was crowded into the experience.

## OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Resource Persons

People constitute one of every community's richest resources for teaching and learning. Almost every person is a specialist in some area. Human resources come in both sexes, and in all ages, races, levels of education, and social backgrounds. Any person with a special talent or specialized knowledge who is able and willing to serve may be called upon. For instance, a retired lawyer may meet with an eleventh-grade class to guide discussion and study of income tax forms, calculations, and records. A blind lad of 13 may demonstrate to sighted agemates use of his Seeing Eye dog, his Braille slate and stylus. A Japanese woman may demonstrate Japanese brush writing and help fourth-graders try writing their names in Japanese. A black city manager may explain what the city is attempting to do about local city problems.

*Preliminary plans* for the use of resource persons include making necessary arrangements within the school, getting in touch with the resource person to set a firm date, and briefing the resource person. Much of the success of the experience depends on this briefing, since the resource person needs to know the general purpose for requesting his help, he should be assured that students' questions will be sent as aids in preparation for his visit. He needs also to know the size and age level of the group, their background on the topic under consideration, the time available for his work with students, where to come, what time to arrive, and whether transportation is provided.

Often parents volunteer to be responsible for transportation of resource persons. During this briefing, the resource person will make known what materials and equipment he will bring and what he expects the school to supply.

A second step in effective use of the resource person is *teacher-student planning and preparation* for the scheduled visit. The principal activities in this step include clarifying the purpose of the visit and discussing and listing questions to be answered either directly by the visitor or through some means that he provides. Another feature of preparation is helping students arrange for proper hospitality. This opportunity for helping students learn to be gracious hosts and hostesses is often overlooked. Finally, the teacher will see that everything is in readiness for the resource person as planned.

### **Community Resources Map**

A community resources map is an outline map of the community on which is marked the location of community resources, such as schools or industries. Some schools make up a number of these maps transferred onto transparencies for projection for group study from a large-scale outline map. Usually it must be specially prepared for school use since natural boundaries seldom coincide with the legal boundaries desired.

Four kinds of base maps are in common use. The first of these shows the physical design of the community. This base map shows the pattern of the community by carrying data such as street layouts and water ways. The land-use map does just what its title indicates. It carries data to show how the land is used, for example, the location of heavy industry or multiple dwellings. The population-location data map can be prepared to show the density of populations, minority group living areas, and the like. The school district base map shows the area served by each local school. Teachers are familiar with this map, for it is used extensively for collecting and presenting data about the particular school district.

Making base maps requires skill which can be developed. However, base maps can usually be obtained from such sources as the assessor's office, the Traffic Commission, and the Planning Commission. When base maps are secured, producing the desired

community resources maps is not difficult. For example, over a base map showing the location of light industry, the use of an overlay showing the location of residences of juvenile delinquents would quickly show whether there was a relationship.

The possibilities of presenting information in an objective, easy-to-observe, and interesting fashion are almost limitless. Yet community resources maps are not widely recognized as resources for learning. What can students learn from map making and map study? First, they learn to get their objectives clearly in mind, they have to know precisely what they want to show and the reason for showing it. The student may require help in locating the kind of base map he needs. He learns how to dig out information through interviews and by consulting records in local offices. Through these activities he can learn much about the community, as well as learning how to go about locating sources of information.

Before the student puts his information on this map, he will want to have someone check the data for accuracy. When he completes the map, he has a visualization that presents the facts clearly and concisely in an objective and interesting manner. This map may be transferred to an overhead transparency and overlays can be added.

So long as he has worked diligently and has his data correct, it does not matter that the transparency is not expertly finished. The important thing is that a lot of learning and a lot of interest have been generated.

Often when the first attempt is accepted and thoughtfully evaluated, the student may be anxious to try again. A committee or a team may work together. The finished transparency maps are an excellent way to present data for a class report or data that are needed for constant reference during a group discussion.

If an individual or a school department such as the social studies faculty plans to build up a collection of useful community resources maps, it is advisable to use an experienced map maker as a consultant. Such a person can help establish a system of color legends that will standardize use of keys. The audiovisual director will be helpful for brushing up on recent developments concerning materials for use on overhead transparencies.

## Community Services

Many students miss the rich social learnings that are made possible when a two-way relationship exists between school and community. Boys and girls should participate in, and learn to recognize opportunities for, rendering services. Only by involvement will students develop greater insight into community needs, cooperative planning, group processes, citizenship responsibility, and the significance of service to others. Some projects may be carried on at school, some may be planned at school but carried on outside, while still others may originate and be completed independently. The latter may or may not be school related.

Community services should be selected for their potential for meeting some needs of the participants. Consideration must be given to whether the students can perform with requisite competency. Planning, evaluating, and replanning as needed are integral parts of the experience. No matter how worthwhile a project, it has no place in the school program unless it will meet the needs of the learners. Through the Red Cross and welfare agencies, elementary schools can get in touch with community service projects that children can perform competently. Among these are making attractive favors for use on hospital and rest-home food trays, collecting paper and glass for recycling, collecting clothing and toys for needy families. Examples of community service projects carried on by more mature students are participating in community conservation projects, cleanup projects, bicycle safety, and serving as junior assistants in local art galleries, hospitals, and museums.

Let us try, for a moment, to get into the shoes of the teenagers in our society. At best the adolescent years are difficult. Add to that the disquieting effects of threat of nuclear war and other social problems that trouble adults as well as adolescents. Cap all this with the realization that their services are not particularly needed by the family (automation has taken over the home chores of yesteryear), that they are a surplus commodity in the workaday world (child labor laws and labor union regulations bar them from employment), and often school seems irrelevant.

Community services are used in some localities to help these young people regain their self-respect and feeling of self-worth,

to reassure them that they are needed, and to help them become useful members of their community. A few projects that have been successful follow:

*Directory.* Teen-agers prepared a directory of local community services to teen-agers.

*Disaster service.* Teen-agers were trained by local agencies working with the schools to stand ready to help in areas where traffic lights are blacked out by electric failure, phone service is disrupted, and similar emergencies.

*Tutorial service.* After having had tutorial training, teen-agers have served in elementary schools as Teen Tutors working on a one-to-one basis with children. Service may be arranged and performed during school hours or in after-school periods.

*Job service.* Some schools have long had a work-study program. Job service is patterned after that idea. Students are trained to work in teams as gardeners, housecleaners, and the like. Those who have administered job service report that teen-agers tend to react more positively when they participate along with adults than when segregated in teen-age groups.

*Larger community projects.* Teen-agers are willing to donate their services if they feel that their activities have significance. Most of them will work wholeheartedly when they actively participate in the planning (and essential replanning when necessary) if they know there is at least a good chance of a successful outcome.

### **School Camping**

Some schools offer short camping experiences designed to maximize learning from direct experience with the natural environment. The camp is a miniature community, its citizens are the teachers and students in residence at a given time. As teachers and students (and often a camp director and assistants) live together, they face the problems connected with housing a group with diverse backgrounds, food services, garbage disposal, and cooperating with those diverse backgrounds. The entire camping experience is a general education experience in democratic liv-

ing. Provision is usually made for students of all age levels to have a turn at the camp experience.

There is education in solving the problems and in the joys of shared living arrangements with those of different backgrounds. There is a feeling of oneness, of belonging, as children share the tasks of living together. Also there are many memorable information-gathering experiences as they participate in gardening, hiking, conservation projects, and exploration of their surroundings.

Letters to parents contain many poignant expressions. "I caught a live fish today." "I got up real close and watched birds at the feeder. I took their pictures to show you." "We watched the sunset last night. It's too beautiful to tell about." "I climbed a tree today. There are so many trees here and no policemen." "Did you ever hear katydids and owls at night?" "I lay down on the grass and looked at the stars." "We played in the leaves, then raked them and built a bonfire. Daddy, did you ever smell burning leaves?"

The school camp idea started with a summer camp experience in California during the first quarter of the century. By 1945, the Michigan State Legislature passed a law making it possible for any Michigan school to purchase its own school camp. The idea spread throughout the country, as many schools felt this was the only way to give city children a chance to get the feel of living close to nature.

Often the camps are located to take advantage of nearby land features such as caves, a dense wooded area, possibilities for land reclamation, and other conservation projects to be carried on by the older students during their stay at camp. The camp becomes the school's laboratory in the woods. Usually the camp and transportation are furnished by the school. Families are expected to pay for the child's food, though civic groups or other agencies underwrite the cost of food for those whose families are unable to bear it.

### Outdoor Education

The term "outdoor education" is often used for designating first-hand experiences, other than camping, offered for studying nature. It may include studying the soil, the topography of the land, endemic animal and plant life, and mineral resources. It

can provide much more. learning to observe, to question, to wonder, to appreciate, and to build an interest that endures throughout life.

The trees, shrubs, and lawn of the school yard can be starting places for studying plants and animals. The school may be within walking distance of a park, a beach, a farm, a wooded area, or a stream. School buses may be used to reach a cave, a beach, a mound, a stone quarry, or a river bed. The county agriculture agent will help in locating conservation projects and experimental farms in the area.

Some school districts develop their own outdoor education resources such as garden plots, nature trails, and all-day trips to rented camp quarters. Some make permanent provision for outdoor education. For example, the Southwest Licking School District in Pataskala, Ohio, located its junior and senior high schools on one eighty-three-acre plot of ground of which thirty acres are used as a forest land laboratory. This outdoor laboratory is used to plant windbreaks and complete other conservation projects, to put into practice the best forest management, and to operate a summer day camp program that includes biological sciences, soil conservation, and gardening. This facility serves both elementary and secondary schools.

Consolidated schools often take advantage of nearby farms and woodlands where students can study the changing pattern with the change of seasons. These children learn to know the woodland as a community made up of a vast population of animal and plant life.

Some schools, unhappily, provide no opportunities for children to learn, work, and play in the great outdoors. Children who lack this experience are less likely to develop a concern for the protection and wise use of their country's natural resources.

### The School's Resources

The school itself is one of every community's major resources for learning. It is financed by public funds and equipped with facilities and materials especially designed and thoughtfully selected for learning. Yet in many communities school facilities are used for learning only 35 percent of the time. Many hours each week and during the summer, the school's resources are



locked while neighborhood children play in the streets or look at TV "because there's nothing else to do." In many communities, however, schools carry on a broader program by offering after-school activities.

The Flint, Michigan, Community Schools demonstrate how a school serves the community on an all-day, basis, six days a week, fifty-two weeks of the year. Such a community school is a center of service that helps all people of the community learn to meet their needs.

Flint's K through 14 grade program for in-school students consists of an integrated arrangement of experiences, some of which are required and some optional. Parents and neighbors are welcome to enroll for the optional parts of the program. The only requirement for becoming a student is making some use of the school's facilities for learning. For example, the whole family that joins an evening swimming class are students, as is the elderly woman who joins a knitting class, the second-shift laborer who joins a mathematics study group, and the mother and her three-year-old who come so that mother and child together may learn to know good literature for young children. At the same hour, some people may be studying classical music while others are learning how to purchase, launder, and otherwise care for clothing.

The services of professional educators and a variety of local resource people are used as needed in meeting the needs and interests of learners.

As an aid to community development, Flint schools work co-operatively with a wide variety of local organizations to strengthen the work of these agencies, not to duplicate it. The schools use the services of various agencies as needed to enrich the school program. In schools such as this, school is life and life is school.

### Learning for Leisure

Educators are disturbed over the fact that many children spend almost as many hours a week viewing television as they spend in school. In response to a leisure-time interests questionnaire given to seventh-graders, a typical explanation for so much viewing was, "There just doesn't seem to be anything else to do." How distressing that in a world so full of things to discover and ex-

perience, so many children have reached junior high school age without discovering any compelling interest in their surroundings. They have had too little experience in planning and choosing.

Leisure time demands active choice making and planning so that time can be fruitfully used for rich living and learning. Community resources for learning can open up new avenues for persons in all age groups.

In school we can plan to involve students in many more planning situations to help them learn thoughtful choice making. We can expose them to a variety of materials and experiences.

The writer has found a questionnaire one effective means of opening doors and stimulating interest in exploring community resources during leisure time. For example, before the weekend, copies of the following question were distributed and discussed in a seventh-grade classroom.

Have you ever visited

Columbus Municipal Airport?

Open all around the clock

Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts?

Open daily 12 noon-5 p.m.

Center of Science and Industry?

Open Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Sun. 1-3:30 p.m.

You can visit these places free of charge.

Many had visited the airport. Few had visited the other two places.

Over the weekend, a few children, some with their families, visited one of these resources for the first time. One boy who visited the Center of Science and Industry saw the planetarium show. His enthusiastic report intrigued some classmates. One boy's father became so interested that he took a group to a nearby city to visit a night showing at a large planetarium. This father in turn gave such an enthusiastic account that some of his co-workers soon paid their first visit to both of these institutions. Often it is by such chain reactions that new interests are discovered.

The questionnaire referred to above was a long one. Each child's questionnaire was returned to him after his teacher had seen it. Students made a check mark after a negative response as soon as that response was no longer valid. They began, conferring with one another. "What have you done?" "Do you know what I did yesterday?"

The questions were related to things the children might experience, with names of places supplied. Some other groups of questions started, "Have you ever attended a free—?" "Have you ever made—?" and "Have you ever tried—?"

Teachers who have adapted this questionnaire to their local areas report that students begin to have interesting things to share through conversation and written expression. Further, the parents become interested, whole families explore the community together.

### **For All the People**

Since people live longer than their ancestors did and retire earlier, they have more free time. For many of these people, the free time is a burden; they do not know what to do with it. Most retirees, however, welcome opportunities to continue their education when challenging opportunities are opened up. For example, The Ohio State University started Program 65 in 1973-74. Any citizen of the state past age 65 can enroll free of charge for such classes as can accommodate him. In classes where tuition-paying students were joined by those past 65, students and faculty report having thoroughly enjoyed learning together. Each quarter the enrollment increased and the university welcomed a greater number of senior citizens in 1974-75.

Other community agencies over the country offer diverse opportunities to retirees. For example, under the jurisdiction of the local recreation and parks department in one city, there are six Senior Citizen Centers. Sunday newspapers carry the program offerings for the week. Offerings at various centers include many purely recreational opportunities. An unusual one is wheelchair shuffleboard. Among educational offerings are ceramics, clothing alterations, copper-enameling, debating, leather craft, music making (choral work, instrumental work, recorder choir), needle-point and crewel work, painting, puppetry, walking trips in parks,

and wood carving. Hot lunch is served by reservation only. Instructors for many of these programs are senior citizens.

### **Administrative Support**

Full and proper use of community resources for learning depends upon adequate administrative support. In many school districts, the administration has given generous financial support to "community resources for learning," as well as full recognition to the contributions they are making to the school program. In many other school systems, however, teachers are expected to use community resources despite the fact that the resources program is shabbily treated when school monies are allocated.

Since teachers are busy professional people, they should not be expected to spend valuable time individually scouting the community to locate needed resources. Such a search can be much more efficiently carried on when funds are provided for locating resources and arranging the information in some codified form to serve as a reference for all teaching personnel and the community at large. Funds should be allocated for the production, periodic updating, and distribution of community resources directories and for production and distribution of the various forms required to implement their use.

Provision should be made for the use of school buses for study trips. The number of trips per year that a given teacher may take should be a flexible matter. There might well be a limit on the number of trips financed by the school system. However, a number of different projects might be scheduled to help students finance additional trips.

Procedures for arranging study trips for class groups, subgroups, and individuals should be standardized and copies of these procedures should be furnished to all teachers in the system. If forms are developed for use in applying for a trip permit, for study trip evaluation, and so on, the business of making arrangements and keeping adequate records will be facilitated.

## SUMMARY

The first part of this fastback recognizes that, no matter what its size or location, every community has vast resources potentially useful for teaching and learning. However, its many rich resources become teaching tools only if they are located and analyzed and the resultant information is made accessible to teachers. This book indicates how these resources can be organized and made readily available to all persons in the community.

Technological developments in our society continue to provide an unprecedented amount of leisure time for both children and adults, many of whom are finding their leisure time a burden. This fastback suggests that all agencies in a community cooperate in publicizing their resources and in helping people explore them.

A further point about community resources is that they are nonbook in character. This means that learning from them requires the learner to rely heavily on his powers of observation. Therefore, teachers have a responsibility for helping children develop competency in observing as well as literacy in reading.

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